

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 21, 2003

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Holiday Trains to Operate at Railtown 1897 State Historic Park

JAMESTOWN, Tuolumne County: Popular holiday train excursions will resume operation as planned at Railtown 1897 State Historic Park, California State Parks officials announced today.

Following completion of necessary repairs to the tracks (carried out by paid and volunteer crews from Railtown 1897 State Historic Park and the California State Railroad Museum, a fellow State Park in Sacramento, as well as volunteers from the Western Railway Museum at Rio Vista) and a thorough inspection, the Sierra Northern Railway earlier this week announced that it would re-certify the tracks for passenger train operations.

The announcement means that steam-powered trains with Santa aboard will operate over the three-day Thanksgiving Weekend plus Saturday and Sunday, December 20-21. In addition, the Park's popular "New Year's Eve Train" will also offer a unique experience to those wishing to ring in the New Year in style. Details follow regarding these special holiday trains.

Santa Train Details

On November 28-30 (the three-day Thanksgiving weekend) and again on December 20 and 21, Santa Claus arrives at Railtown 1897 State Historic Park aboard his very own train! Pulled by an authentic, chuffing steam locomotive, "Santa's Express" will feature 1920s-vintage passenger coaches decorated festively for the occasion, with Santa riding along to give out candy canes to all children.

Santa trains will depart hourly 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.—on the above dates only—from the Railtown Depot, located at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Reservoir Road in Jamestown. Step aboard for a six-mile, 40-minute roundtrip ride through California's Gold Country. The Railtown Depot Store, Interpretive Center, and grounds will be open, with roundhouse tours are available for a nominal fee. This is an attraction the whole family will enjoy!

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Along with train rides, Railtown 1897 will offer additional activities on these special dates. Christmas melodies will fill the air, and Roundhouse Tours will be available. Hot chocolate and cookies will be served in the Depot Store, where shoppers are invited to browse a selection of books, videos, souvenirs, and *Thomas* merchandise. Tours of the Historic Sierra Railroad Shops and Roundhouse are \$2 adults, \$1 youths (ages 6-12), ages 5 and under tour free. Tickets for "Santa's Express" are \$6 adults, \$3 youths (ages 6-12), ages 5 and under are free.

New Year's Eve Train

On Wednesday evening, December 31, 2003, a unique and exciting train will depart from Railtown 1897 State Historic Park in Jamestown, California, to ring in the New Year—in style! Boarding begins at the Railtown Depot at 9 p.m., with return arrival in Jamestown scheduled for approximately 12:30 a.m. on January 1, 2004. For this gala trip, the heated train of vintage coaches will be pulled by an historic diesel locomotive.

The seventh annual New Year's Eve Train will have plenty to offer for New Year's Eve partygoers. Guests will enjoy a hearty fare of "heavy hors d'oeuvres" aboard the train. Live music will be performed by the band "Endangered Species," with dancing in the Baggage Car. Party favors, two free drink tickets, complimentary midnight Champagne (and souvenir glass), and a no-host bar are included. Come join the fun and have a blast while your train travels through Gold Country!

Tickets for the New Year's Eve Train are \$75 per person, and reservations are required. For more information or to make reservations, call Railtown 1897 State Historic Park at (209) 984-3953, or visit www.railtown1897.org (please note that reservations *cannot* be made online).

General Information

Known today as "The Movie Railroad," Railtown 1897 State Historic Park, along with its historic locomotives and cars, has been featured in over 200 motion picture and television productions dating from the early Silent Movie era to the present. Included in the list are the epic western "High Noon" and popular television shows like "Petticoat Junction." The list of movie stars includes such notables as Gary Cooper, W.C. Fields, Mae West, the Marx Brothers, Clint Eastwood, and Michael J. Fox.

The Park's "Historic Sierra Railroad Shops and Roundhouse" is one of only two intact and fully functional survivors of its kind in North America. Where once you could find at least one roundhouse in every large town or city, and perhaps even in smaller towns too, most are gone today—along with, in many cases, the railroads they once served. Tours of the complex, offered daily, include viewing of historic locomotives and cars used in many films along with numerous "props," like station signs and fake smokestacks, created for specific films.

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For families, Jamestown and the nearby town of Sonora are charming places for a weekend day trip—and a great way to learn about California history! The historic Gold Rush town of Columbia, today a State Historic Park, is itself just a few miles from Sonora. For details regarding Railtown 1897 State Historic Park and its history, visit www.railtown1897.org. For tourism information, contact the Tuolumne County Visitors Bureau at (800) 446-1333, or visit www.thegreatunfenced.com.

Operated by California State Parks with assistance from the nonprofit California State Railroad Museum Foundation, Railtown 1897 State Historic Park offers year-round tours plus train rides weekends April-October (selected dates only November-December). Known as "The Movie Railroad," the Park and its trains have been featured in hundreds of feature films, TV shows, and commercials. The Park is located at the corner of Fifth and Reservoir in Jamestown, reached by highways 49/108. Open daily except Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day, the Park's operating hours vary by season: April-October, 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; November-March, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. For more information, call Railtown 1897 State Historic Park at (209) 984-3953, or visit our Web site at www.railtown1897.org.

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